

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
DIVISION OF FIRE SAFETY
NEW JERSEY FIRE SAFETY COMMISSION**

MEETING OF JULY 14, 1999

The New Jersey Fire Safety Commission met on Wednesday, July 14, 1999 at the Dempster Training Center, Lawrenceville (Mercer County)

Council Members Present: Assemblyman John V. Kelly, Chairman
Mr. Pasquale J. Intindola, Vice Chairman
Mr. Peter V. Ackerman
Mr. C. Kenneth Anderson
Mr. David G. Aron
Mr. Richard Blohm
Mr. Daniel DeTrollo
Ms. Michelle L. Elwood
Mr. John Lightbody
Mr. Gerard J. Naylis
Mr. Roger S. Potts
Mr. Armando Roman
Mr. Charles W. Schilling
Mr. Stephen G. Szczepaniak
Assemblyman John Wisniewski
Mr. Lawrence D. Wood

DCA Staff Members Present: Charles A. Richman, Asst. Commissioner
William H. Cane, Director
William E. Kramer, Deputy Director
Glenn A. Kasper, Secretary
Marylain Kemp, Administrative Assistant
Cynthia A. Wilk, Assistant Director
Codes & Standards

Guests: Charles Augenbaugh, Jr. New Jersey
Deputy Fire Chiefs Association

Jack Dries, Vice Chairman
Bill Wrublevski, Absolute Fire Protection
Chief Gene Keller, Jr., Montgomery Twp.
Volunteer Fire Co. #2
Arthur Mercurio

- A. Noting the presence of a quorum, Chairman Kelly brought the meeting to order at 10:00am. The Chairman led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance and pointed out the exits.
- B. With no corrections necessary, the Chairman moved that the minutes of the May meeting be accepted.

C. **Correspondence:**

Glenn Kasper noted there were three (3) pieces of correspondence copies of which were in each member's meeting packet.

D. Division of Fire Safety Activities:

Director Cane reported that 88% of the High Rise Building Fire Protection Surveys have been returned. The Division has received responses from 100 of the 126 L.E.A.'s who were mailed questionnaires. The goal is a 100% response. Staff will follow up by phone and letter to the L.E.A.'s who have not returned their surveys. The Division is working with Commissioner Szczepaniak to come up with a cost estimate for retrofitting high rise buildings.

Director Cane has submitted a nominee to DCA Commissioner Kenny for appointment to the Peer Review Group. When the nomination is approved, the Division will conduct training for the Group. The staff, through increased monitoring, has discovered a few fire officials who may have been remiss in their duties. The Peer Review Group is the process that these fire officials have to question whatever action the Division of Fire Safety decides is appropriate.

The Director said the Tobacco Settlement lawsuit case will give New Jersey \$92.8 million dollars for the first year and a total of \$7.6 billion

dollars over 25 years. The Division will explore the possibility of acquiring part of the settlement monies.

Mr. Cane said our Web site is up and running. He extended an invitation to all Commission members to submit information for the site, whether it is for the organization they represent or themselves individually. Any material should be sent directly to Director Cane or Deputy Director Kramer. Bill Kramer noted that there is a section of the Web Page dedicated for the Fire Safety Commission.

In regards to thermal imaging equipment, the Director said \$7.5 million dollars has been appropriated in the FY2000 budget. Deputy Director Kramer said staff is working with the Department of Treasury's Purchase Bureau. The Bureau is currently accepting bids from the manufacturer of thermal imaging equipment to be put on state contract. The choice of what equipment to purchase will be up to the individual fire departments.

Director Cane said the Division is hoping to have two or three vendor days around the state to allow the manufacturers to display and demonstrate their products. He added that the thermal imaging grant program might have to extend until the next fiscal year.

E. Advisory Council Reports:

1. Codes Advisory Council:

Commissioner Schilling reported that the Council met on June 16, 1999.

High Rise Sprinkler Protection:

Discussed under Division Activities.

Atlantic City Casino Code Change Proposal:

The proposal to upgrade Casino Fire Safety programs and procedures was reviewed. The sub committee presented information and guidelines used by the city of Las Vegas.

It includes code requirements, alarm reporting, staffing, investigation, training, etc. The committee and the Division will review these guidelines and report at the next meeting. Recently a Casino suffered a fire loss, which showed the need for better procedures for the protection of life and property.

Code Change Proposal:

Proposed Code Revision (F.505.2.1) anyone disabling, tampering or interfering with the effectiveness of any component of a fire suppression, fire detection, or alarm system shall be in violation of this code. Council approved amendment.

Commissioner Schilling asked Director Cane what was the status of the Sprinkler regulations? The Director said the regulations have not been signed. A question arose about the number of documented incidents over the past few years. The Director asked several organizations for documented information but nothing has been received. The regulations are currently in limbo, the Director said, he would hope that Assembly Bill 3185 sponsored by Chairman Kelly, concerning this issue, would be able to move forward. Commissioner Schilling asked if copies of the bill could be sent to all Commission members.

2. Training and Education Advisory Council:

Commissioner Anderson reported the Council met on June 15, 1999. The committee reviewing Firefighter I certification program continues to meet. Additional meetings will be held before recommendations are made to the Council.

The Council will hold informational meetings in the fall to outline what is suggested for the Officer Certification program and solicit feedback before a final recommendation is made to the Commission.

A committee is reviewing concerns expressed at the Instructor's Retreat regarding the recently adopted requirements for C.E.U.'s for instructor recertification. A determination will be made if any revisions to the requirements are appropriate.

The Fire Police Law was amended last July. One amendment requires that before performing any duties, a fire police officer shall qualify by "successfully completing a basic fire police training course formulated or approved by the Division of Fire Safety." A draft of regulations prepared by Division staff was distributed for Council review. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 12, 1999 at the Dempster Training Center.

3. Statistics and Information Advisory Council:

Commissioner Naylis noted that a current listing of civilian fire fatalities is included in the meeting packets. As of July 13, 1999 there were 31 fatalities, which is a decline from previous years. The vast majority of these fatalities continue to occur in residential occupancies. Chairman Kelly has asked the Office of Legislative Services to assist him in drafting legislation mandating the reporting of fires using the state Fire Incident Report System. The bill will include funding for computer equipment.

4. Master Planning and Research Advisory Council:

Commissioner Woods said he did not have a report but he wanted to make a few comments. He was unable to attend the council meeting because he was never notified. He never received any information from the Division. Commissioner Woods hopes the meeting schedule would be sent to him post haste, so that if he has a conflict he will rearrange his schedule.

5. Public Education Advisory Council:

Commissioner DeTrollo reported the Council met on July 1, 1999 at St. Barnabas Hospital in Livingston. Two new members of the council were introduced. Eddie Hicks of the Atlantic City Fire Department and Greg Collier of the Mount Laurel Fire Department Chairman Kelly presented representatives of WABC TV a Proclamation from the New Jersey Assembly in the Assembly Chamber on June 14, 1999 for their donation of 20,000 smoke detectors to needy residents of North Jersey.

The new Fire Safety for Senior Citizens book will be reduced to 12 pages and sent to Fire Officials to distribute to senior citizens.

A new program called a Teacher's Guide to Injury Prevention to complement the Fire Safety Skills program is in a draft stage.

Commissioner DeTrollo reported that 10,000 copies of the winning poster for the 1998-99 Fire Prevention Poster Contest would be printed and distributed statewide.

He also noted that a copy of Ed Cohn's Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Committee report is in your meeting packet with a copy of the new video PSA.

6. Firefighter Safety and Health Council:

Commissioner Vreeland was unable to attend the Commission meeting. He did send a letter (a copy of which is in the meeting packet). In the letter Commissioner Vreeland said his Council is reviewing the Personal Accountability System and he will have a report at the September Fire Commission meeting.

Charles Augenbach Jr., President of the New Jersey Deputy Fire Chiefs Association addressed the Commission and said he was concerned with the time factor regarding this issue and the fact there isn't a common personal accountability system. He wants the Division of Fire Safety to conduct three public hearings now, before the Firefighter Health and Safety Committee completes its' report.

Commissioner Blohm, who is a member of the Council, said there were some issues raised in regards to Mr. Augenbach's presentation. One council member noted there are personal accountability tag systems that have medical information included. The Council is going to look into the cost factor involved and whether it will impact with the "state mandate, state pay legislation." Commissioner Blohm said it is an excellent concept but having public meetings before the council completes its report may be putting "the cart before the horse". Director Cane said the Division would make a decision, shortly.

F. Committee Reports:

1. Juvenile Firesetter Committee:

Commission Aron reported the Council met on June 10, 1999. The Committee in cooperation with the New Jersey Fire Prevention and Protection Association will conduct a seminar at the League of Municipalities convention in Atlantic City on Thursday, November 18, 1999 at 3:00PM in Room 301 of the Atlantic City Convention Center. The program will be titled "Juvenile Firesetting in Your Homes, Cities and Towns and will be chaired by Commissioner Whitcraft. The program is geared to public officials.

Chairman Aron has asked the committee members to send operating costs of their programs to the Division. The Committee can not develop a funding strategy until the actual costs are known.

Salem County has started a countywide program administered by the Fire Marshal's office. Chairman Aron will meet with Director Cane to discuss a possible grant program for FY 2000.

2. Water Supply and Water Standby Charges Committee:

Commissioner Naylis apologized for not having the draft of his "White Paper" completed but it will be finished shortly. He noted that Chairman Kelly has introduced legislation to eliminate standby charges on new sprinkler tie-ins, for both public and private water suppliers of six inches and less.

3. Residential Sprinkler Committee:

Commissioner Naylis said this would also be addressed in his "White Paper".

G. Old Business:

1. Committee Report on Resolution:

Commissioner DeTrollo reported the committee met and they have a report in draft form, which he and Commissioner Naylis are working on. It includes the Mission of the Fire Safety Commission.

2. Report on the Mission of the Fire Safety Commission:

Discussed under Committee Report on Resolution.

H. New Business:

Commissioner Anderson asked for a motion to approve his travel request to the 1999 Mid Atlantic Association of State Fire Commissions in Hunt Valley, Maryland, October 17-20, 1999. The motion was approved.

Charles Augenbach Jr., President of the New Jersey Deputy Fire Chiefs Association asked Chairman Kelly to add one sentence to his proposed legislation concerning county mutual aid plans. The current draft says "For the purposes of preparing for mutual aid fires or other emergencies involving cooperative efforts of fire departments and forces within the county, each county Emergency Operations Plan shall provide for a command structure that affords appropriate command support for the designated battalion chief or incident

commander.” Mr. Augenbach asked to have the following sentence included, “Tour Commanders, deputy chiefs and battalion chiefs shall be included for mutual aid.” Chairman Kelly said he would take it under advisement.

Former Fire Commissioner Jack Dries announced that the Urban Search and Rescue Bill with an appropriation of \$1,500,000 was signed by Governor Whitman.

Arthur Mercurio, President of the New Jersey State Volunteer Fireman’s Association thanked the Division for assistance in drafting federal legislation for an anti-terrorism program. Congressman Andrews has introduced the bill. Mr. Mercurio also urged the fire service to make use of the Recruitment and Retention Video.

There being no further business brought before the Fire Safety Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 11:02am.

Respectfully

Glenn Kasper, Secretary